

Balades
de Visage
sanz
Peinture

And, but you list releve him of his peyne,
Preyeth his beste frend, of his noblesse,
That to som beter estat he may atteyne.
Explicit.

THE COMPLEINT OF CHAUCER TO HIS
EMPTY PURSE.



O you, my purse, & to non
other wight
Compleyne I, for ye be my
lady dere!
I am so sory, now that ye be
light;
for certes, but ye make me
hevy chere,
Me were as leef be leyd upon
my bere;
for whiche unto your mercy thus I crye:
Beth hevy ageyn, or elles mot I dye!

Now voucheth sauf this day, or hit be night,
That I of you the blisful soun may here,
Or see your colour lyk the sonne bright,
That of yelownesse hadde never pere.
Ye be my lyf, ye be myn hertes stere,
Queene of comfort and of good companye:
Beth hevy ageyn, or elles mot I dye!

Now purs, that be to me my lyves light,
And saveour, as doun in this worlde here,
Out of this tounne help me through your might,
Sin that ye wole nat been my tresorere;
for I am shave as nye as any frere.
But yit I pray unto your curtesye:
Beth hevy ageyn, or elles mot I dye!

Lenvoy de Chaucer.

CONQUEROUR of Brutes
Albioun!
Which that by lyne and free
eleccioun
Ben verray king, this song to you
I sende;
And ye, that mowen al our harm amende,
Have minde upon my supplicacioun!

MERCILES BEHUTE: A TRIPLE
ROUNDEL.



OUR yēn two wol slee me
sodently,
I may the beauté of hem not
sustene,
So woundeth hit throughout
my herte kene.
And but your word wol helen
hastily
My hertes wounde, whyl that
hit is grene,
Your yēn two wol slee me sodently,
I may the beauté of hem not sustene.

Upon my trouthe I sey yow feithfully,
That ye ben of my lyf and deeth the quene;
for with my deeth the trouthe shal be sene.

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Your yēn two wol slee me sodently,
I may the beauté of hem not sustene,
So woundeth hit throughout my herte kene.

O hath youre beauté fro your herte chaced
Pitee, that me ne availeth not to pleyne;
for Daunger halt your mercy in his cheyne;
Gittles my deeth thus han ye me purchaced;
I sey yow sooth, me nedeth not to feyne;
So hath your beauté fro your herte chaced
Pitee, that me ne availeth not to pleyne.

Allas! that nature hath in yow compassed
So greet beauté, that no man may atteyne
To mercy, though he sterve for the peyne.
So hath your beauté fro your herte chaced
Pitee, that me ne availeth not to pleyne;
for Daunger halt your mercy in his cheyne.

SIN I fro Love escaped am so fat,
I never thenk to ben in his prison lene;
Sin I am free, I counte him not a bene.

He may answer, and seye this or that;
I do no fors, I speke right as I mene.
Sin I fro Love escaped am so fat,
I never thenk to ben in his prison lene.

Love hath my name ystrike out of his sclat,
And he is strike out of my bokes clene
for evermo; ther is non other mene.
Sin I fro Love escaped am so fat,
I never thenk to ben in his prison lene;
Sin I am free, I counte him not a bene.

Explicit.

A COMPLEINT TO HIS LADY.



HE longe night, whan every
creature
Shulde have hir rest in som
what, as by kinde,
Or elles ne may hir lyf nat
long endure,
Hit falleth most into my
woful minde
How I so fer have broght
myself behinde,
That, sauf the deeth, ther may nothing me lisse,
So desespaiied I am from alle blisse.

This same thocht me lasteth til the morwe,
And from the morwe forth til hit be eve;
Ther nedeth me no care for to borwe,
for bothe I have good leyser and good leve;
Ther is no wight that wol me wo bereve
To wepe ynogh, and wailen al my fille;
The sore spark of peyne doth me spille.

II.

The sore spark of peyne doth me spille;
This Love hath eek me set in swich a place
That my desyr be never wol fulfille;
for neither pitee, mercy, neither grace

Can I nat finde; and fro my sorwful herte,
for to be deed, I can hit nat arace.
The more I love, the more she doth me smerte;
Through which I see, withoute remedye,
That from the deeth I may no wyse asterte;
for this day in hir servise shal I dye.

III.

Thus am I slain, with sorwes ful dyverse;
ful longe agoon I oghte have taken hede.
Now sothly, what she bight I wol reherse;
hir name is Bountee, set in womanhede,
Sadnesse in youthe, and Beautee prydelees,
And Plesaunce, under governaunce and drede;
The Wyse, yknit unto Good Aventure,
That, for I love hir, sleeth me giltelees.
hir love I best, and shal, whyl I may dure,
Bet than myself an hundred thousand deel.
Than al this worldes richesse or creature.
Now hath nat Love me bestowed weel
To love, ther I never shal have part?
Allas! right thus is turned me the wheel,
Thus am I slayn with loves fyrry dart.
I can but love hir best, my swete fo;
Love hath me taught no more of his art
But serve alwey, and stinte for no wo.

IV.

Within my trewe careful herte ther is
So moche wo, and eek so litel blis,
That wo is me that ever I was bore;
for al that thing which I desyre I mis,
And al that ever I wolde nat, I wis,
That finde I redy to me evermore;
And of al this I not to whom me pleyne.
for she that mighte me out of this bringe
Nerecheth nat whether I wepe or singe;
So litel rewthe hath she upon my peyne.

Allas! whan sleping, time is, than I wake,
Whan I shulde daunce, for fere than I quake;
Yow rekkeht never wher I flete or sinke;
This hevy lyf I lede for your sake,
Thogh ye therof in no wyse hede take,
for on my wo yow deyneth not to thinke.
My hertes lady, and hool my lyves quene!
for trewly dorste I seye, as that I fele,
Me semeth that your swete herte of stele
Is whetted now ageynes me to kene.

My dere herte, and best beloved fo,
Why lyketh yow to do me al this wo,
What have I doon that greveth yow, or sayd,
But for I serve and love yow and no mo?
And whylst I live, I wol do ever so;
And therfor, swete, ne beth nat evil apayd.
for so good and so fair as that ye be,
hit were a right gret wonder but ye hadde
Of alle servants, bothe goode and badde;
And leest worthy of alle hem, I am he.

But nevertheless, my righte lady swete,

Thogh that I be unconning and unmete
To serve as I best coude ay your hynesse,
Yit is ther fayner noon, that wolde I hete,
Than I, to do yow ese, or elles bete
Whatso I wiste were to yow distresse.
And hadde I might as good as I have wille,
Than shulde ye fele wher it wer so or noon;
for in this worlde living is ther noon
That fayner wolde your hertes wil fulfille.

for bothe I love, and eek dreed yow so sore,
And algates moot, and have doon yow, ful
yore,
That bet loved is noon, ne never shal;
And yit I wolde besече yow of no more
But leveth wel, and be nat wrooth therfore,
And lat me serve yow forth; lo! this is al.
for I am nat so hardy ne so wood
for to desire that ye shulde love me;
for wel I wot, alas! that may nat be;
I am so litel worthy, and ye so good.

for ye be oon the worthiest on lyve,
And I the most unlykly for to thryve;
Yit, for al this, now witeth ye right wele,
That ye ne shul me from your service dryve
That I nil ay, with alle my wittes fyve,
Serve yow trewly, what wo so that I fele.
for I am set on yow in swich manere
That, thogh ye never wil upon me rewe,
I moste yow love, and ever been as trewe
As any can or may on lyve here.

The more that I love yow, goodly free,
The lasse fynde I that ye loven me;
Allas! whan shal that harde wit amende?
Wher is now al your wommanly pitee,
Your gentillesse and your debonairee,
Wit ye nothing therof upon me spende?
And so hool, swete, as I am youre al,
And so gret wil as I have yow to serve,
Now, certes, and ye lete me thus sterve,
Yit have ye wonne theron but a smal.

for, at my knowing, I do nothing why,
And this I wol besече yow hertely,
That, ther ever ye finde, whyl ye live,
A trewer servant to yow than am I,
Leveth me thanne, and sleeth me hardely,
And I my deeth to you wol al forgive.
And if ye finde no trewer man than me,
Why will ye suffre than that I thus spille,
And for no maner gilt but my good wille?
As good wer thanne untrew as trewe to be.

But I, my lyf and deeth, to yow obeye,
And with right buxom herte hoolly I preye,
As is your moste plesure, so doth by me;
Wel lever is me lyken yow and deye
Than for to any thing or thinke or seye
That mighte yow offende in any tyme.
And therfor, swete, rewe on my peynes
smerte,

A Com-
pleint to
his Lady

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